

THE FIELD POLL

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Special *Field Poll* Release

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MAJORITIES ATTACH HIGH IMPORTANCE TO STATE'S COAST AND OCEAN. THREE OUT OF FOUR VOTERS VISIT AT LEAST ONCE A YEAR. ACCESS REMAINS A PROBLEM FOR MANY.

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In a survey commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the enactment of the California Coastal Act of 1976, *The Field Poll* finds that Californians care deeply about the state's coast and ocean and regularly go to the beach.

A vast majority (90%) of voters in the state say that the condition of the ocean and beaches in California is important to them personally, with 57% saying it is "very important." There is broad agreement across voter subgroups about the importance of the coast, with majorities of voters across all age, ethnic, and income groups, as well as among voters in both coastal counties and inland counties.

More than three out of four California voters (77 percent) visit the coast at least once a year. This includes one in four voters (26 percent) who say that they visit the state's coastline once a month or more, 37% who say they visit several times a year and 14% who visit it about once a year. Voters under age 40, parents of children under age 18, and those residing in coastal counties are more likely than others to be making frequent visits to the coast. Least likely to be visiting the coast are voters in the Central Valley, seniors age 65 or older, and African Americans. Income is also a factor. Voters with annual household incomes of \$60,000 or more are more likely than those earning less than \$40,000 to visit the coast frequently.

"Despite the Coastal Act's guarantee of access for all Californians, the poll found significant barriers remain," said Jon Christensen, the lead investigator for the study at UCLA's Institute of the Environment and Sustainability. According to the poll, limited public access to the coast and beaches was cited as a problem by 62% of voters. Other barriers to access cited by a majority are limited affordable options for parking (78%) limited options for affordable overnight accommodations (75%) and limited public transit options (68%).

The poll builds upon an earlier survey of beachgoers, conducted this summer by researchers at UCLA and San Francisco State University, in also exploring the obstacles to access to the coast.

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"The vast majority of Californians care deeply about the coast," said Christensen. "But *The Field Poll* and our beach surveys this summer show that the coast is not accessible to all Californians. We need to fix that. And we hope this poll and our survey of beachgoers can point toward solutions."

Christensen and Philip King, a San Francisco State University economist who has studied beach access issues for 20 years, also conducted a survey of more than 1,000 beachgoers this summer on 11 state, county, and city beaches in Ventura, Los Angeles, and Orange Counties. They found that beachgoers from across the state and across all groups are deeply connected to the coast, with most beachgoers visiting the coast several times a year. They found that the primary reasons that people visit the coast are to relax and enjoy the scenery and spend time with family and friends (31% said they come to the beach so their children can play). The top amenities that people across all groups want at the beach are clean sand and water, followed by basic amenities such as trash cans, restrooms, and parking.

The beach surveys found that most people come to the beach with family or friends (63% come in a party of three or more), and most people come to spend a good part of the day (43% spend two to four hours, and 45% spend more than four hours). About one out of four groups at the beach are spending at least one night near the beach. Once they get to the beach, most people swim or wade in the water (58%) or take a walk (40%), in addition to relaxing and enjoying the scenery (51%). Latino and African-American beachgoers as well as visitors from households with lower incomes ranked the cost of visiting the beach and lack of public transportation as obstacles to visiting the beach at higher rates than other visitors.

"California's beaches are one of our state's most important democratic spaces," said King. "And we found that despite our differences, beachgoers share many of the same desires and reasons for coming to the coast. Our beaches are places open to all of us, where everyone can recreate. We need to make sure they are accessible to everyone."

Note: The accompanying chart pack provides a more detailed accounting of the survey findings.

Information About the Survey

Methodological Details

The findings in this report come from a survey of 1,800 registered voters in California conducted by *The Field Poll* on behalf of the Institute of the Environment and Sustainability at UCLA.

The survey was completed online by YouGov October 25-31, 2016 in English and Spanish. YouGov administered the survey among California registered voters included as part of its online panel of over 1.5 million U.S. residents. Eligible panel members were asked to participate in the poll through an invitation email containing a link to the survey. YouGov selected voters using a proprietary sampling technology frame that establishes interlocking targets, so that the characteristics of the voters selected approximate the demographic and regional profile of the overall California registered voter population. To help ensure diversity among poll respondents, YouGov recruits its panelists using a variety of methods, including web-based advertising and email campaigns, partner-sponsored solicitations, and telephone-to-web recruitment or mail-to-web recruitment. Difficult-to-reach populations are supplemented through more specialized recruitment efforts, including telephone and mail surveys.

After survey administration, YouGov forwarded its data file to *The Field Poll* for processing. *The Field Poll* then took the lead in developing and applying post-stratification weights to more precisely align the sample to *Field Poll* estimates of the demographic characteristics of the California registered voter population both overall and by region.

Questions Asked

How important is the condition of the ocean and beaches in California to you personally? Very important, Somewhat important, Not too important, Not at all important.

How often would you say you visit a beach or the coast of California for any purpose? Once a week, Once a month, Several times a year, Once a year, Less than once a year, Never.

IF NEVER OR LESS THAN ONCE A YEAR: Why don't you go to the coast or beach in California more often? Please check all that apply. Getting time off work, Amount of time it takes to travel to the coast, Cost to visit the beach, Availability and cost of parking, Lack of public transportation options, Lack of affordable options to stay overnight, Concern about negative interactions with law enforcement, My friends and family don't go to the coast or beach, I can't swim, Physical impairment prevents me from going to the coast or beach.

Do you think each of the following is a big problem, somewhat of a problem or not a problem in the part of the California coast closest to you? a. Limited public access to the coast and beaches, b. Limited affordable options for overnight stays, c. Limited affordable options for parking, d. Limited public transportation to the coast and beaches.

Note about Sampling Error Estimates

Polls conducted online using an opt-in panel do not easily lend themselves to the calculation of sampling error estimates as are traditionally reported for random sample telephone surveys.

– Chart Pack –

Factors Relating to How Often Californians Visit the Beach or Coastline

– A survey of registered voters conducted by –

The Field Poll

and the

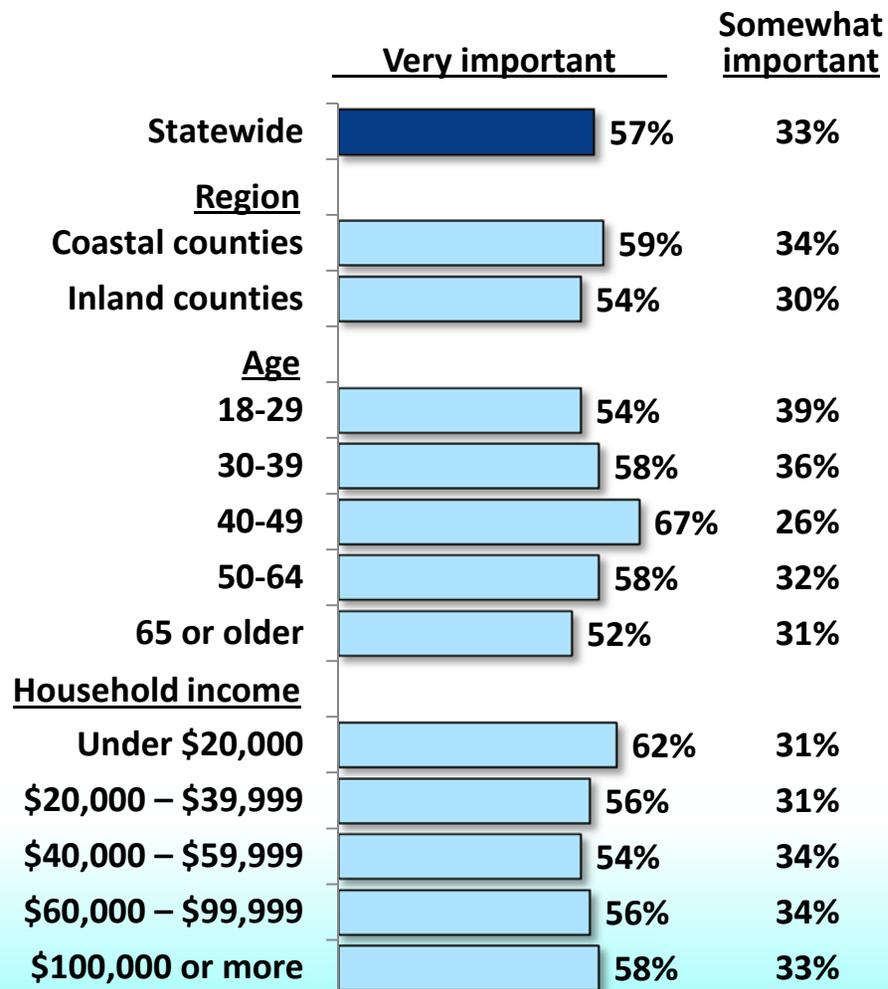
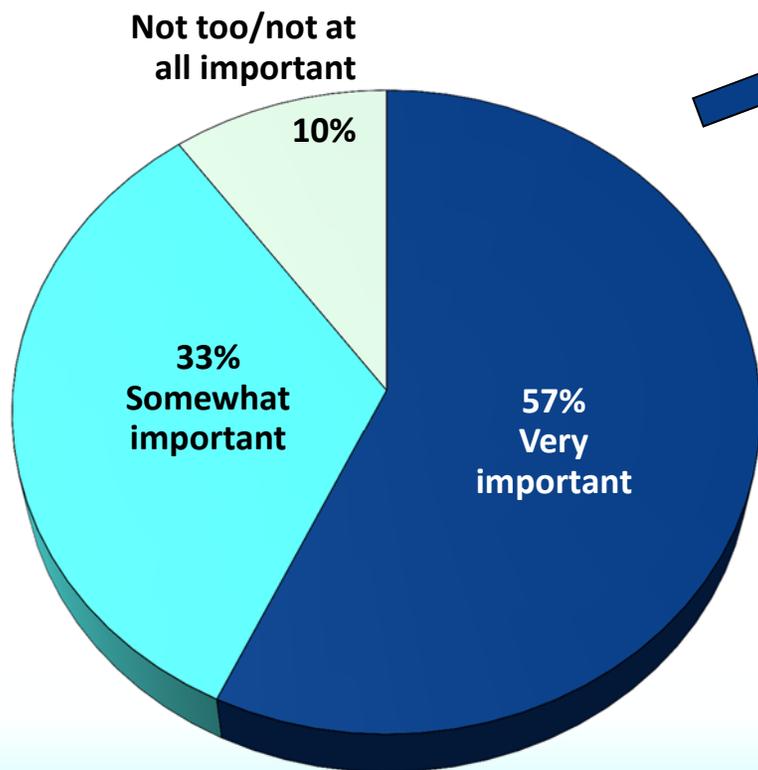
***The UCLA Institute of the
Environment & Sustainability***

Late October 2016

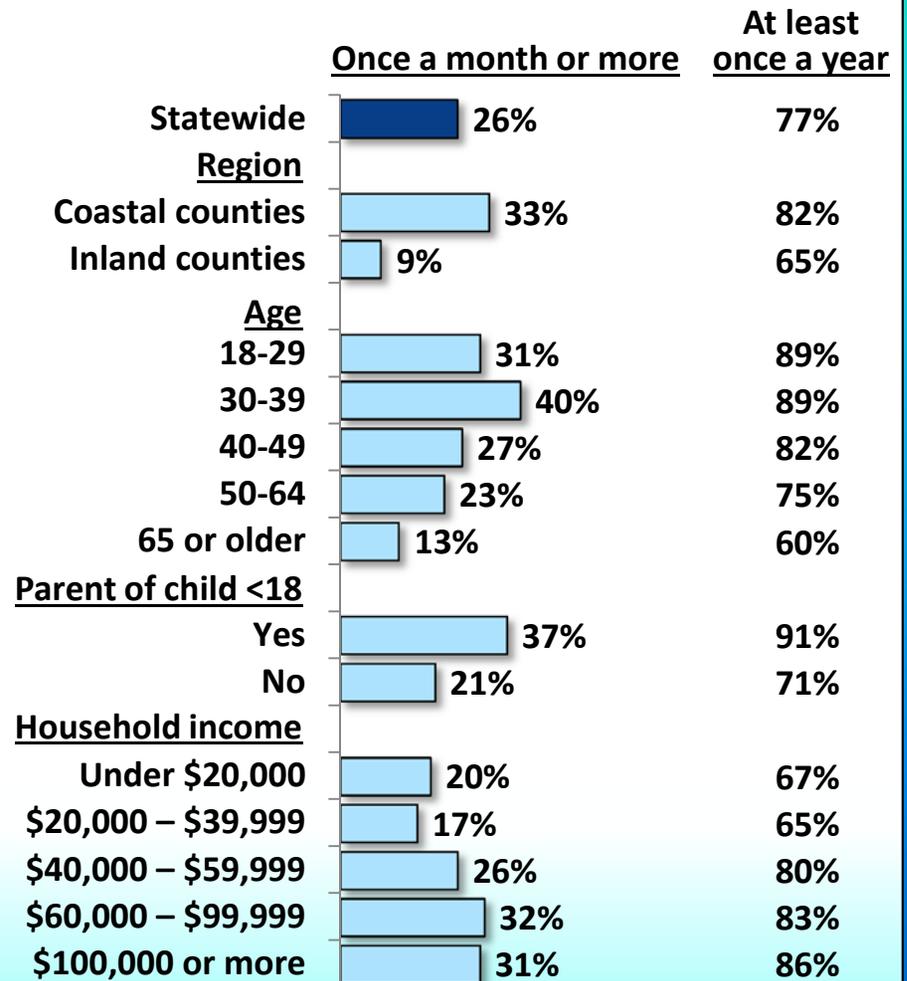
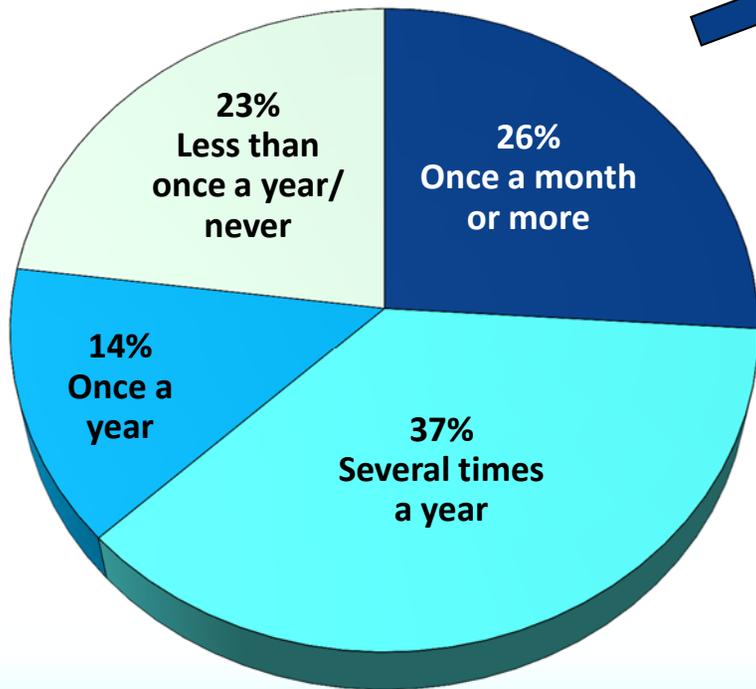
About the Survey

Population surveyed:	California registered voters.
Sample size:	1,800 voters surveyed in English and Spanish.
Interviewing period:	October 25-31, 2016.
Method:	Survey conducted online by YouGov among the California registered voters included in its online panel of over 1.5 million U.S. residents.
Sample weighting:	Post-stratification weights applied to align the sample to the demographic characteristics of registered voters statewide and by region.
Auspices:	Conducted on behalf of the UCLA Institute of the Environment & Sustainability.

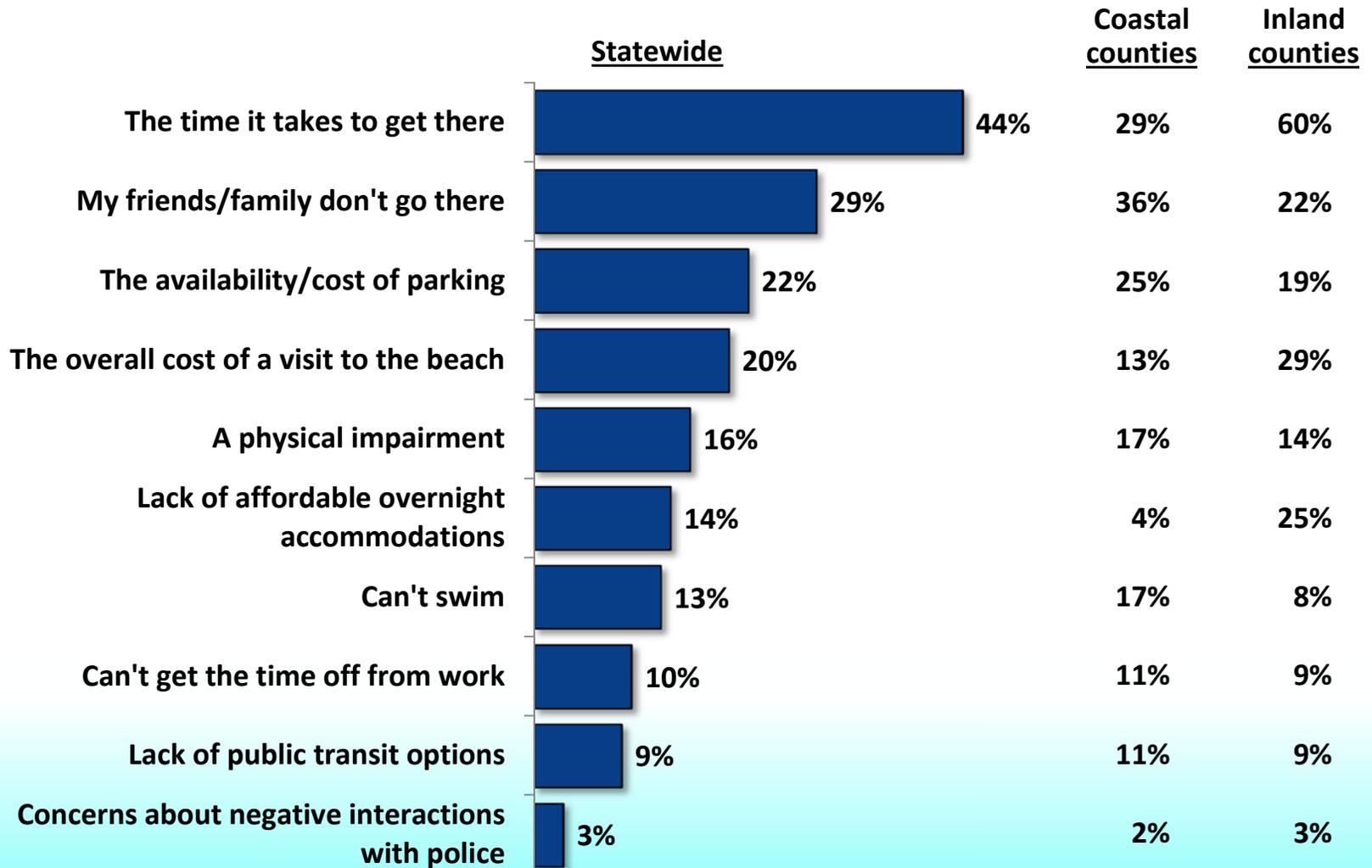
Majorities of voters of all ages, income levels and in all regions believe the condition of California's oceans and beaches is very important to them



Frequencies of visiting California's beaches and the coast varies by age, presence of children, income and proximity to the coast



**Reasons why those who don't visit the coast or beach frequently
say they don't go there more often
(asked of voters who visit the beach/coast less than once a year)**



The extent to which all California voters perceive each of the following four factors as problems when visiting the coast

